
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EACH YEAR AS AUTISM AWARENESS
MONTH IN HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, this body finds that autism is part of a complex
2 group of neurodevelopmental disorders, collectively called
3 autism spectrum disorders; and
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5 WHEREAS, autism involves delays in and problems with social
6 interactions, language, and a range of emotional, cognitive,
7 motor, and sensory abilities that vary according to where the
8 individual falls on the spectrum ranging from mild impairments
9 to severe disabilities; and
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11 WHEREAS, the diagnosis of autism in an individual
12 transcends all social, religious, socio-economic, and geographic
13 boundaries; and
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15 WHEREAS, based on statistics reported by the United States
16 Department of Education and other governmental agencies, autism
17 is growing at a startling rate of ten to seventeen percent per
18 year; and
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20 WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and
21 Prevention estimate that autism affects as many as one in every
22 one hundred and ten children, and studies show that over the
23 last twelve years, the prevalence of autism has dramatically
24 increased by 289.5 percent; and
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26 WHEREAS, at the rate autism is growing, the Autism Society
27 of America estimates that the prevalence of autism could reach
28 four million Americans in the next decade; and
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30 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Department of Education's Special
31 Education Section offers educational services to students with
32 autism and works with families and students to develop an
33 individualized education plan; and



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WHEREAS, in 1994, the Department of Education had seventy-one children, ages six to twenty-one years, with autism who were eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and that number increased to 1,064 by 2010; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the Department of Education served an additional two hundred thirty-four eligible, school-aged children with autism, ages three to five, through the Department's preschool special education programs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Health provided intensive behavioral support services to one hundred sixty-five children with autism spectrum disorders, ages zero to three years, through its Early Intervention Services Section; and

WHEREAS, while there is no cure for autism, early identification of developmental concerns allows parents to seek intervention during the crucial period of early development; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics - Hawaii Chapter released a position paper stating that there should be specific screening for autism spectrum disorders at eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty-six months of age and recommends that the screening be done through the use of the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities launched a public awareness campaign called "Learn the Signs. Act Early.", which aims to educate parents about childhood development, including early warning signs of autism and other developmental disabilities, and encourages developmental screening and intervention; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Maternal Child Health Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities program and autism groups in Hawaii are supporting and undertaking the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign; and

WHEREAS, providing widespread information is necessary to educate parents, professionals, and the general public about autism, its effects, and the critical importance of early developmental screening and intervention; now, therefore,

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 2 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 3 Twenty-sixth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
 4 of 2012, the Senate concurring, that this body proclaim the
 5 month of April of each year as "Autism Awareness Month" in
 6 Hawaii; and

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 8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the month of April of every
 9 year serve as a special opportunity to educate the people of
 10 Hawaii about autism, to increase awareness of the importance of
 11 screening through the "Learn the Signs. Act Early" campaign,
 12 and to encourage families with children, ages eighteen to
 13 twenty-four months, throughout the State of Hawaii to have
 14 screenings at well child visits with their pediatric health care
 15 provider; and

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 17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 18 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the
 19 Director of Health, the Superintendent of Education, the State
 20 Council on Developmental Disabilities, Autism Society, Autism
 21 Speaks, Talk About Curing Autism, Hawaii Parent Training and
 22 Information Center, Autism/PDD Family Support Group, Autism
 23 Support for Kauai, Kauai Autism/PDD Family Support Group, Hawaii
 24 Families As Allies, Autism Awareness Puna - A Family Support
 25 Group, Military Parents Autism Support Group for all branches of
 26 service, the Exceptional Family Member Program, Community
 27 Children's Councils, and the Hawaii Maternal Child Health
 28 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related
 29 Disabilities Program.

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OFFERED BY: DM

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